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YOSEMITE THE WORLD'S WONDERLAND

BY

CHARLES WESLEY KYLE.

"NO DESCRIPTION I
HAVE EVER SEEN
IN VERSE OR PROSE
HAS SO DELIGHTED ME."

DR L A BUNNELL

"Here are the nooks where the blue-
birds nest
And the four-leaved clover blows."



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YOSEMITE

The World's Wonderland

By CHARLES WESLEY KYLE

WHAT EMINENT CRITICS SAY

"No description I have seen in verse or prose has so delighted me as the one in the "Tourist" by Mr. Charles Wesley Kyle."

DR. L. H. BUNNELL, Homer, Minn., June 25, 1894,
In Winona "Republican."

"Your article is one of the very best I have ever seen descriptive of Yosemite's wonders. Please send me all the copies that you can obtain of those issues in which it appears. I wish to send them to my friends."

GALEN CLARK, for twenty years Guardian Yosemite Valley.

"The wonders of Yosemite have never been described more strikingly than by Charles Wesley Kyle, whose charming article will be hailed with delight by all lovers of the Valley. Many of us feel and marvel at its unique and overpowering presence, but lack the language to describe it as he has so aptly done."

PROF. J. M. HUTCHINGS,
Author-Lecturer, for twenty years Guardian of the Valley.

"A description so graphic and interesting as to mark his work pre-eminent. His work will live for he has written on the hearts of men."

F. A. FALKENBURG, in Rocky Mountain News.

We now quote from C. W. Kyle, whose word-painting of these (Yosemite) Falls is the best we have ever seen:--"

D. J. FOLEY, Editor Yosemite "Tourist and Guide."

"There is a thought of power and singular beauty in the following lines by C. W. Kyle."

CATHEDRAL SPIRES

"No foot has pressed those stairways dizzy,
No hand has touched those silent bells.
No mortal sacrastan there busy,
Silence alone the story tells;
Those aisles untrod, save by the spirits,
Whose mortal forms rest 'neath the sod:
They only have the power to hear its
Chimes of God."

REV. DR. THOMAS, of Chicago.

"Your article which has just come under my notice is one of the most thoughtful and satisfactory I have seen regarding my work."

LUTHER BUREANK, Santa Rosa, California.

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1915

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YOSEMITE

The World's Wonderland



By CHARLES WESLEY KYLE

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Yosemite

The

World's Wonderland

Silence! Emotions new and strange here rise
And sweep with cyclonic force the breast!
A new, strange world, all powerful and sublime,
Enchains, enslaves and fetters all;
The greatest most of all, are fettered most;
Only the pignies chatter, and fools alone
Find laughter here, where Nature speaks
In tones of grandeur and sublimity!
Strong lips are dumb and eyes unused to tears
Are forced to yield the highest tribute of the soul
To these grand thoughts of the eternal mind!

* * * * *

In the Golden West, where the towering mountains
Pillow their heads on the breast of the sky;
Where the storm-king stores in his frozen fountains
Life for the valleys, when parched and dry;
In a wonderland where God is splendor,
His thought has spoken in words of stone,
Grandeur sublime and Beauty tender—
Guard His throne.

'Mid massive domes of the Sierras' columns,
Where power supreme to the eye is shown;
Where an awe-inspiring vastness solemn,
The mind with force of the Great Unknown,
There lies a gem—a thought of beauty,
Which the mountains guard, as the depths the sea,
Where peace is law and joy is duty—
Yosemite!

Its granite walls but the eagles follow,
To dizzy heights in the distant sky;
No eye can see from their crests the hollow
Where in peace the beautiful valleys lie.
No foot has trod its sky-linked turrets:
The heaven's purple enmantles them,
The crystal snows alone are for its
Diadem.

Long ages since a glacier rested
Within these walls, and then begun
Erosion's work, 'til of form divested—
Slowly yielding to rain and sun—
This ice king grand with beauty glowing.
That here on high had reared its head,
Hearing the sound of the South wind blowing,
Left its bed.

These massive walls remain unheeding
The frosts of winter, the summer's sun,
Alone, unmoved, by every pleading
By Nature voiced, since Time begun:
The winds, the storm, the rage volcanic,
In vain to move their structure yearns,
Jove's lance with seething hate satanic
Futile burns.

JUN 30 1915

The golden rays of the sunlight turning
The icy bolts of the vaults of snow,
Shone in, and, 'neath their kisses burning,
The gems were wooed to a crystal flow.
"River of Mercy" for all things near it,
Dispensing life with its song of glee,
White as a virgin's unsoiled spirit,
Light and free.

Swifter than winds or the flight of swallow,
The milk-white waves of this river foam,
On toward the granite-guarded hollow,
Where bloom and joy find a welcome home;
With plunge and shout, like distant thunder,
It leaps from the brow of that mountain wall;
It spins and weaves and bursts asunder
In its fall.

White rockets flash from the column's cover,
Their courses marked by a silvery mist;
Caught by the winds the spray-wreaths hover,
In folds of light by the sunbeams kissed;
Veiling the river's lips which thunder,
With sprays bejeweled and clouds high rolled,
Beauty most rare; magical wonder,
Shot with gold!

Vision divine, unmoved and nameless,
Thy wonders remain while ages fret;
Thy power unfettered and ever tameless,
Thy Bows of Promise forever set;
Now by the gold of the sunlight painted,
Now by the rays of the Night's pale bride;
Matchless work of all things created—
Deified!

Thy castled walls sphinx-like forever,

Their silent story ceaseless tell,

Unto the crystal foaming river,

Whose tones of thunder, chimes of bell,

Voice the only thought here spoken

Of ages past which one may know,

Heard in the words unchanged, unbroken—

“Long ago.”

Throne of the continent! Queen of all splendor!

Creation supernal! Work wholly divine!

When touched by thy presence the cold heart grows tender,

And reels with a joy as though drunken with wine;

Transcendent valley with sky-woven ceiling,

Rivers that murmur, white-lipped falls that roar,

Records divine, His wonders revealing,

More and more.



YOSEMITIE

The measure of greatness is effect. Power and force expressed in mountain, sea or storm, are measured by the effect produced. The effect depends upon the nature and capacity of the register.

Nature, in motion or repose, stands alone—unchallenged, unapproached in works of power. Her groupings of eternal peaks and domes, tossed heavenward by unmeasured volcanic force and ocean power, record her mightiest efforts. Grandeur and sublimity there voicing. If read aright they lead the soul into the mansions of the King.

In attempting to delineate the effect of natural wonders, we realize that "language is but a veil concealing thought," and baffles the registry of a countless multitude of divergent impressions that elude separate treatment, and demand, as their legitimate heritage, the recognition of being considered as inseparable parts of the perfect whole.

A journey from the sea to the crest of the Sierras, where the blue arch falls away from the zenith to an unobscured and perfect circular horizon on every hand, presents, aside from the winding stairway of its latter half, but little to prepare the mind for the grandeurs there revealed.

The knowledge that many world-famed pens have in the past depicted impressions of the Yosemite Valley would decide that mine should remain idle, and it would be so but for the knowledge of experience, which proves that this master-work of the Hand Divine presents to every mind and heart impressions differing in degree, if, indeed, not in kind.

It was on a June afternoon that I visited this wonderful spot. The rain was gently falling and the mist-clouds rolled in feathery blue-gray banks along every gorge and through the giant mountain pines, hanging over cliff and peak, shrouding the valley and the precipitous walls of four thousand feet to its bed below, thus presenting the novel appearance of uniting the earth and the clouds.

My companion and I had spent many days—days which stand out and glow like radiant gems on the rosary of life, alternating with refreshing nights—traveling and camping

in the valleys, through the canons and along the mountain steeps under the pines.

We had visited the "Big Trees"—the Calaveras Grove—and in the presence of these gigantic creations, by the magic of their influence, had been made to feel for the moment, the mortification of being changed to the stature of Lilliputians. And no wonder, for these great trees—the *Sequoia gigantea*—are over three hundred feet in height, and the greatest of them are estimated to be at least four thousand years old. One of them, "The Father of the Forest"—long since fallen and prone—through its hollow trunk the fires had eaten, yet, its mammoth form was still firm and intact. Mounted upon a horse I had entered the hollow at its base and ridden for the distance of eighty-two feet along the interior of this great tree and emerged, sitting erect upon my horse, at a knot hole; we had with us specimens of the bark of these great trees eighteen inches in thickness, and some of the little burrs or cones, the fruitage of these trees which recalls and emphasizes the parable of the mustard seed.

We had been shown through one of the most gorgeous palaces of the earth's interior—the Calaveras Cave, and had ridden over Table Mountain, made famous by Mark Twain and Bret Harte. Our visit to the cave had proven a most wonderful surprise, owing to the fact, perhaps, that those who have seen have not said. Water working with lime proves itself a finished architect; its lines are drawn with a grace and perfection not to be excelled. This cave presents thousands of forms of remarkable beauty; stalactites, stalagmites and corals all gleaming and sparkling with diamond luster, as the torch lights of our attendants bring them into view. One never-to-be-forgotten creation was composed of great angel wings—several of them set about four inches apart; thin, and almost transparent, with ribbons-fluttering-in-the-wind tracings, running through them, reflecting rainbow hues. A guide, striking them with muffled sticks, rang out the chimes, and then played a familiar air, which, owing to the surroundings, was weirdly pleasing. Here were cascades, white as polished silver, delicate as filmy laces; streams of crystal waters foaming over stony and broken steeps presenting the marvelous illusion of ceaseless motion, yet, forever still.

The Naiads, with the aid of la luna and the winds, never



Beautiful Bridal Veil Fall, 620 Feet

wove a more delicate broidery of silver light and contrasting shadow for festal robes in honor of their queen, than here appear as though floating over the dark background of solid stone. An iridescent dream of fairyland carved out of stone. Instantaneous petrifications of roaring falls and foaming rivers, laughing rills and rushing cascades, sparkling fountains and gardens white with bloom; quaint figures of Nature's perfect sculpturing representing, mayhap, poets, musicians, philosophers and deities of some fairy kingdom ruled by Nature spirits in the bygone centuries, and, perchance, still so ruled. Who knows? Is not intelligence manifest in the formation of these things?

The memory of these striking object lessons and the thoughts which they aroused intermingling with the wealth of pleasurable anticipations which for years had been centered upon the revelations of this hour—a view of Yosemite—rallied all my powers of mind to reinforce observation. Nothing escaped my attention; the scene, with every detail clear and distinct, was photographed upon the plates of memory. I look them over after the lapse of more than twenty years, and there the bluejay—the noisy wastrel of the woods—flies screaming amid the pines; small dark clouds, wind-driven through the mists, sprinkle us in passing; the ferns sway and nod from amid the moss-covered rocks by the wayside; the moist breeze fragrant, with the odors of the woods, fan us refreshingly, and a coyote comes out of the boulders by the now abandoned sheep fold and runs along with us not twenty feet distant. Yes, my mind was alert and my memory plastic. Has not Ralph Waldo Emerson said of the Yosemite Valley: "It is the only place I ever saw that came up to the brag"? Yes, the Yosemite must be all and more, from the very nature of its being, than has been or ever can be said of it.

The afternoon is well worn as we approach the crest of the mountain range. The hour of revelation is at hand. Every heart beat thrills with the weight of expectancy. The winds sweep through the tree tops, testing the keys and setting them atremble; the mists trail the course of the winds through the gorges and over the streams which break into roaring cascades as they dash on their way, surging and struggling, curling and foaming amid the rocks and boulders that deflect but cannot impede their course.

The mist becomes more dense, then slowly changes into rain. The warm, tiny drops fall steadily. The rivulets by the roadside increase in volume and in motion. We are now traversing the short decline from the crest to the valley.

The roar of falling waters, which had long filled our ears, now perceptibly increase as we advance. It is like the constant roll of distant thunder. The incline of the roadway becomes more pronounced, and to our left that which we thought a denser cloud is seen to be a mountain up the perpendicular walls of which no foot has ever trod. We turn to the right, and behold! the world's wonderland lies before us.

Yosemite

The driver draws rein. We are speechless. Occasional deep breathings tell of the awakened emotions. We alight and approach the brink of the chasm. Is it the mist that begins to trouble our eyes? I observe my friend using his handkerchief with unwonted frequency, ostensibly on his field glasses, but I have a well founded suspicion that all of the moisture does not arise from the exterior.

During the first lull in the storm of my emotions, or shall I say when I was first enabled to ride the successive waves of the conflicting emotions into which these powerful sights and sounds had thrown me, I began to adjust my mental compass and cast about for some guiding star. I at once realized how perfect must be the mental control of a general in the heat of battle who has the ability to direct his army with skill and effectiveness, when, on every hand his forces are being crushed by a seemingly irresistible enemy. I find it difficult to express my state of mind; its anchor chains were snapped, the rudder was torn away, the rigging was swept from the deck of my mental ship, by the force and unexpectedness of the scene, yet, my feelings and emotions were the most delightful I had ever known. It was like being caught in a storm at sea where every wind and wave gave promise of life, more life, and crowning one with power and honors that raise to nobility.

Should a lion of jungle ferocity leap with terrifying roar into the path directly before you while you were walking in the quiet of your garden, the shock could scarcely be greater than

that which seized me when I found myself standing on the verge of the valley. I was poised on a perpendicular wall four thousand feet high! The solid earth fell away from my feet! To have moved forward would have been to step off the earth into seemingly fathomless space!

Instinctively I drew back shuddering. The intensity of my feelings were overpowering. In its presence I was powerless; before its voicings I was dumb. The abyss appeared bottomless. Glancing over the sheer wall into its impenetrable depths I felt as though raised to a dizzying sky-distance. A strange and mysterious power seized me as if to draw me down through its cloud-veiled depths. The faculties of my mind were shocked into a degree of activity and alertness that made practical strangers of them all. I was not my former self; the impressions flowing into my consciousness swept away all previous concepts, and for the moment ruled supreme.

To the fore, across the valley, the farther wall of which was now completely hidden by the mists, seemingly from out the heavens, a milk-white river came plunging through the air more than a thousand feet, being finally lost in a great white crater formed of its rebounding spray.

The mists grew more dense, and the clouds drifted by, around, and over me, shrouding the view and folding their soft sheen into gray turbans about the nearer lofty peaks and domes.

I look, then close my eyes, the better to impress the scene upon my memory, then look again, comparing the outward picture with the inward record, well knowing that, in all probability, I shall never again experience an equal exaltation of the powers of observation. Is my memory faithfully recording the scene? Yes. I find it standing out, true in every line, as though cut with an artist's tool upon plates of steel! A mental cameo visualized, vitalized and indelibly inscribed.

To my right, winding, wavering, fluttering, as white ribbons streaming in the wind, came numerous silver traings—lesser streams in their leap into space where they are tossed and whirled on the wings of the wind until broken into spray they lose their identity as streams and fall, man knows not where.

Away down in the center of the gorge I could faintly trace through the mists, the outlines of the Mereed river as its waters dashed and foamed amid the granite boulders of its



YOSEMITE FALLS, 2600 feet

bed, forming a continuation of cascades as far as the eye could see.

Now I reach a new view point. The mists are clearing away and I am enabled to more clearly grasp the larger view. Behold these rivers of pearls and diamonds, five of them with many lesser streams, pouring out of the heavens, as the Kings of the Sierras make haste to tear the jewels from their crowns and fling them, with voicings of homage, into the lap of this dazzling Queen of all Nature's royal creations.

Through a rift in the clouds, away beyond and above the head of the valley, standing out in bold relief, I beheld the colossal forms of Clouds Rest, Sugar Loaf, Cascade Cliffs, Mt. Starr King, and farther beyond, Mt. Lyell and his coterie of countless peaks and domes stretching away to seemingly limitless sky-distances, peak after peak, dome after dome, spires and minarets rising from temples and mosques, mounting higher and still higher into the distant heavens, all snow-capped, cloud-wrapped and sky-mantled, glistening and flashing in the sunlight, and by contrast with the nearer beelouded scene, below and about me, rendered brilliant and dazzling beyond conception.

A city set in the sky; lifted above the clouds; clothed in a flood of light! The brilliant gleamings of the ice-eased spires and snow-capped domes, piercing the purple of the sky; the gold and crimson kisses of the declining sun, flashing back and forth, as if signalling the "All's well" to the distances veiled from human sight. What a scene! He who sees not there the revelations of the Divine is afflicted with both mental and moral strabismus. It appeals not only to the eye and ear of man, but directly to his soul; its language is unconfined.

In the presentation of its wonderful message to the hearts and minds of men, there are no false notes. It plays not only upon every key of the auditory register, but it rings its music along every aisle of the temple of sensation, awakening the whole man. Pure as the heaven born winds and the crystal waters that bear its message, are the thoughts and emotions aroused by its voicings.

Every sense perception flashes along the course of familiar experiences, and then beats against the limits of its capacity until wearied and exhausted it falls prone and helpless, realizing that it must await a renewal and further growth of power;

the sight blurs in its efforts to observe the finer lineaments of the scene, and the ear, notwithstanding its marvelous acuteness in discriminating sounds, loses the separate magic chords as they blend in the triumphal anthem. Like begets like; marvels beget marvels; revelations call for revelations. Nature sets no lesson we may not learn. This much to me was made plain.

Listen! My vision was filled to repletion, and my ears were overflowing with sound when, marvel of marvels! I became aware that I was seeing without eyes and hearing without ears, for every nerve in my body had been awakened and was consciously responding to the torrent of sound and the revelations of light that flowed around, over, beneath and through me, with the same freedom and ease that sunbeams pierce the filmy mists. My very soul, trembling with the weight of expectaney, leaned out to catch the most subtle meaning, that it might rise on the wings of aspiration to greater heights than it yet had known, and then, caught in the grip of an irresistible power—the sense of all human littleness—emanating by contrast from the majestic presence of this master creation of the universe, it was thrown into the valley of humility where, from necessity, it sank down to pray, in utmost weakness beseeching:

“Father, Thy spirit! light for our pathway, more light, still more light.”

In tones of majesty the very heart of nature speaks, proclaiming the power and glory of the King of Kings. The earth trembles and the very air is vibrant as it receives the message. It sweeps through the canons and echoes through the forests. The tall pines sway in unison, keeping time to the music as it rises and falls in harmonious cascades of song. Caught by the winds the melody is carried to the upper sentinels which in turn flash the message to the sun. Fervent, commanding, dominant are its voiceings, yet running through the billowy sea of sound there may be noted a thousand minor strains, soothing and persuasive as a mother's slumber song intoned to the accompaniment of crystal beads falling upon silver bells.

Not on the printed page where, so graphically depicted, appear the accounts of the glorious achievements of former civilizations, nor in the record of the dark tragedies which mark their defeat; not in the recital of the heroic deeds of valor done on the field of Marathon by the stalwart sons of Athens under

the intrepid leadership of Miltiades where the initial victories for human liberty were won; not in the accounts of the peerless sacrifices made by Sparta's sons when as ruler of Greece she was the pride and glory of the world; not in all the records of imperial Rome seated on her seven hills and ruling the earth; not in the valorous deeds of the sturdy Englishmen on the fields of Agincourt and Crecy where their victories over the French marked one of the pivotal points of the world's history; not in the record of the first crime of brother against brother; not in the record of any tragedy ever enacted or drama ever written, either secular or divine, from the account of the creation of light to the latest exhibition of the glory of "the ever recurring mystery," none, nor all of these have an equal power to quicken and to raise the mind to that degree of vision where it is enabled to realize and grasp so much of sublimity and grandeur as are revealed in this first view of the Yosemite.

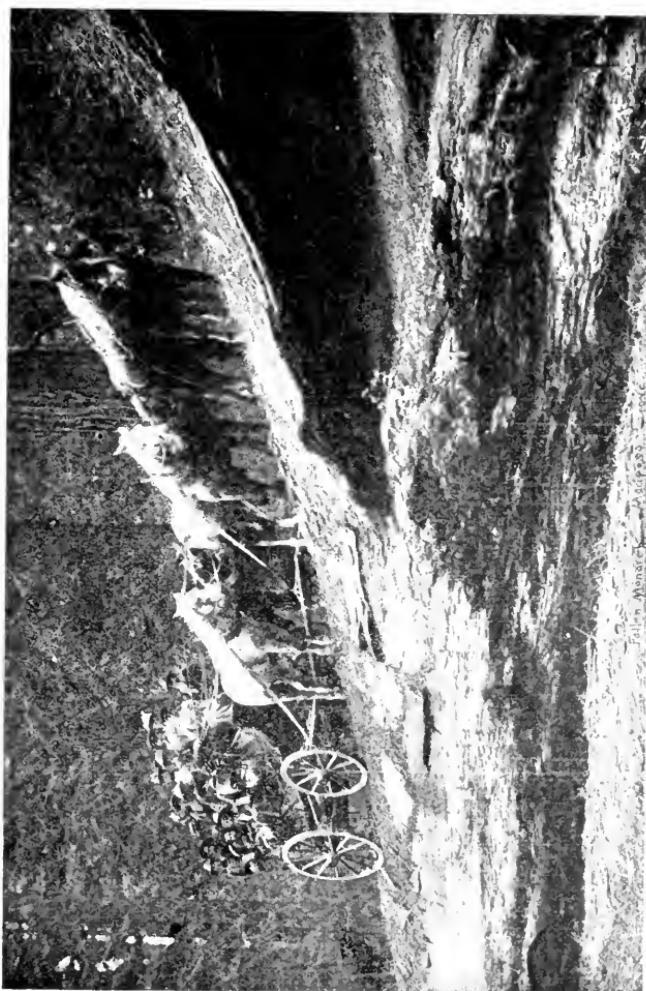
It is the most striking presentation of truth I have ever seen.

It is the most powerful revelation of truth to which I have ever listened.

It is the unmistakable and unimpeachable word of God.

No wonder that men see and hear, then tremble and adore! Here the Almighty speaks face to face with man in a universal language. He speaks to all alike, revealing all of love and wisdom and power that man can receive; His hand alone has fashioned it, and to contemplate it in silence and give heed to the marvelous lessons of truth by it revealed, is to come to learn of the inherent evidence of things, wherein lie the ever unfolding manifestations of the Deity. Finite in form, yet limitless in revelation, satisfying every mental desire and justifying and stimulating, marvelously stimulating, the aspirations of the soul.

This, my first view of the valley, caught from the eminence of the Tuolumne road, from whence the descent into the valley is begun, is impressive beyond portrayal. Here spread out to view is a scene beside which the imagery of a Haggard limps painfully. If all the imaginings and visions impressed upon the minds of men at any time anywhere could be composed, and contrasted with it, I am sure that the latter would be found wanting in every essential of power and grace, of beauty and



Fallen Monarch, Mariposa Grove of Big Trees

sublimity. In its presence words are given new and intensified meanings.

It has neither prototype nor similitude.

The striking and forceful nature of the scene falls upon and crushes its way through the mind with a degree of power that hurls all the faculties of sensation into inextricable confusion. All preconceived ideas and formulated outlines of its nature, from whatever source obtained, are utterly demolished and destroyed by this one first glance. Such was my experience then, and such it has remained, unchanged and undimmed after the lapse of a quarter of a century.

Shackled by the chains of its adamantine power my faculties of expression are made prisoners, bound and thrown into the cell of silence as I turned at the call of my companion to continue our way into the valley. I wave him on. He understands. I await until he has disappeared down the winding road which here begins its zig-zag course over the debris which, at this point, makes an entry into the valley possible. I had long since learned Nature's mode of instruction to be individualistic; that she initiates her candidates one at a time, passing them through her temples and instructing them in her deeper mysteries, each to the degree only which they have proven, by previous training, their worth and capacity to receive.

Look! Away down, thousands of feet below me, swaying in the wind, as if signaling a welcome, the forest trees attest the permanence of the scene which for the moment I had found myself doubting, hesitating, disbelieving, yet ever being convinced of the reality of the form and coloring of things I had thought unreal. The valley is carpeted with luxuriant grasses through which the gleaming river dashes, throwing aloft in tenuous founts its glittering spray.

I move on, reluctantly breaking the hold which my immediate surroundings throw about me. Lovely cascades come laughing down the mountain, leaping into the roadway, then over fern-nodding and moss-painted rocks, silvering the shadows of dogwood, the pure, white, star-shaped blossoms of which gleam in striking contrast to the deep green foliage.

Alert with expectancy, filled with wonder, and a resultant feeling of tumultuous delight, I slowly continue my winding descent into the valley with emotions, I apprehend, much as the

lowest commoner would approach and enter the royal palace of his sovereign.

At every step new and unique wonders are revealed, startling, soothing, astounding. The marvelous greatness is too colossal; the beauty too appealing, the shocks arising from unexpectedness of the revelations follow each other in succession too rapid to permit the mind to steady itself long enough for its grapnels to secure an anchorage for contemplation. Such surprises must cease before calm consideration may begin.

Down, down, down, led the winding stairway, upon the narrow shelving, lapping fold over fold, presenting from its rapidly changing position on the canon's side a different point of observation from which the same objects present constantly changing features. As I approach the bed of the valley the trees below me assume more distinct outlines, and the music of the river cascades and of the distant falls, comes trembling through the forests and rebounding from the towering walls, softly repeat their mellifluous tones.

Listen! The current of sound changes as the wind funnels the air; now here, now there, and now I am in the course of its greatest volume of sound. It roars and tosses, surges and beats as the waves of an impalpable river, flowing on and filling with nerve trembling resonance the whole valley from wall to wall.

Now I reach the clean, level, sanded floor of the valley: the great walls tower above me on every hand in awful grandeur; they seem to curve in and lean over me. I involuntarily shudder lest they fall and crush—they seem to move! Shut in from the world, the green floor of the valley, the gray granite of its majestic walls and the strip of blue at the zenith only are visible. I am in the bridal chamber of the King! A deep feeling of reverential awe steals through the senses and I move with care lest my presence should mar, or in some manner destroy the dazzling brilliancy and delicate broidery of this royal palace. Colossal towers, dizzying spires, and palatial domes, all cloud-wrapped, snow-capped, and sky-mantled, over-top the whole and render impressive beyond the power of speech to describe the effect which crushes with mountain weight upon the mind.

Speaking of a visit made in 1860 to the valley, Horace Greeley said: "Of the grandest sights I have enjoyed—Rome

from the dome of St. Peter's, the Alps from the valley of Lake Como, Mount Blanc and her glaciers from Chamouni, Niagara and the Yosemite—I judge the last named the most unique and stupendous. It is a partially wooded gorge, one hundred to three hundred rods wide, and three thousand to four thousand feet deep, between almost perpendicular walls of gray granite, and here and there a dark yellow pine, rooted in a crevice of either wall, and clinging with desperate tenacity to its dizzy elevation. The isolation of the Yosemite, the absolute wilderness of its sylvan solitudes, many miles from human settlement or cultivation, its cascade two thousand feet high, though the stream which makes this leap has worn a channel in the hard bedrock to a depth of one thousand feet, renders it the grandest marvel that ever met my gaze.'

To particularize is, in a large measure, to destroy. Especially is this true of the Yosemite. Not that the separate factors which enter into and compose the whole of this grand scene are not in every sense worthy of distinct consideration, but because the effect of one part cannot be separated from the influence of all the other parts, so closely are they grouped, so interlaced and interwoven are their influences that they together form one grand and glorious whole that admits of no division. In this, all who have visited the valley will agree, but to those who have not seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears, felt with their hearts, and had the measure of their understanding filled to overflowing with the overshadowing powers and forces here presented, this statement may seem strange. Well, it is a strange spot. It contravenes, challenges, defies and overshadows all the other works of nature. It stands alone, unsurpassed in earthly loveliness, and crowned with robes of illuminating glory all divine.

El Capitan

This overshadowing monument is unquestionably one of the grandest and most massive rocks in the world. It cannot be adequately described by metes and bounds for measurements of thousands of feet, when applied to a rock, conveys no relative meaning to the mind of its imposing nature, its grandeur, its power and its colossal size. Names of ordinary things carry

with them a general sense of their relation to other things, such as men, animals, birds, but not so with El Capitan. It stands in a class by itself, and might justly be referred to as The Rock, there being none other of similar size in the known world.

When the forces of civilization, both mental and physical, under monarchic rule rendered centralization possible, the acme of architectural construction was achieved. St. Peter's, ending with the skilled and famous hand of Michael Angelo, stands as the *chef d'œuvre* of all human constructive effort. But wonderful as is this completed design of human achievement, its importance compared to these grand temples of God is as the pebble to the mountain. If some unmeasured and incomprehensible force should hurl it with the swiftness of a cannon-ball against the face of El Capitan, though ground to powder by force of striking, it would effect this great rock much as one of our greatest ironclads would be by the striking of a pea thrown from a school boy's sling.

It is too great for one to easily comprehend, and any attempt to familiarize one's self with it only serves to expand and enlarge its individuality. The giant pines growing upon its crest appear like sprays and twigs when viewed from the valley, and moving horsemen there can be but faintly discerned.

If some convulsion of nature should throw it over upon its face, as now presented to the valley, it would require one hundred and sixty acres for its bed. Mountain pines, giants of the forest, appear upon its bosom, much as mosses adorn rocks that are elsewhere called large. Heights, elsewhere termed "dizzy," would serve but for suitable stepping stones of approach to these marvelous temples "not made with hands." God's work here shown is above man's, as infinity is above the finite.

Looking across the valley, yet, for the purposes of inspection, practically already at its base, we see "Cathedral Rock." Carved out of one solid mass, this vast structure presents an appearance very suggestive of a great cathedral. The two spires are literal spires, piercing the skies, from their elevated foundation, for nearly one thousand feet. They are marvelously beautiful and strikingly suggestive of the solemn offices to which they have been dedicated. One pauses instinctively as

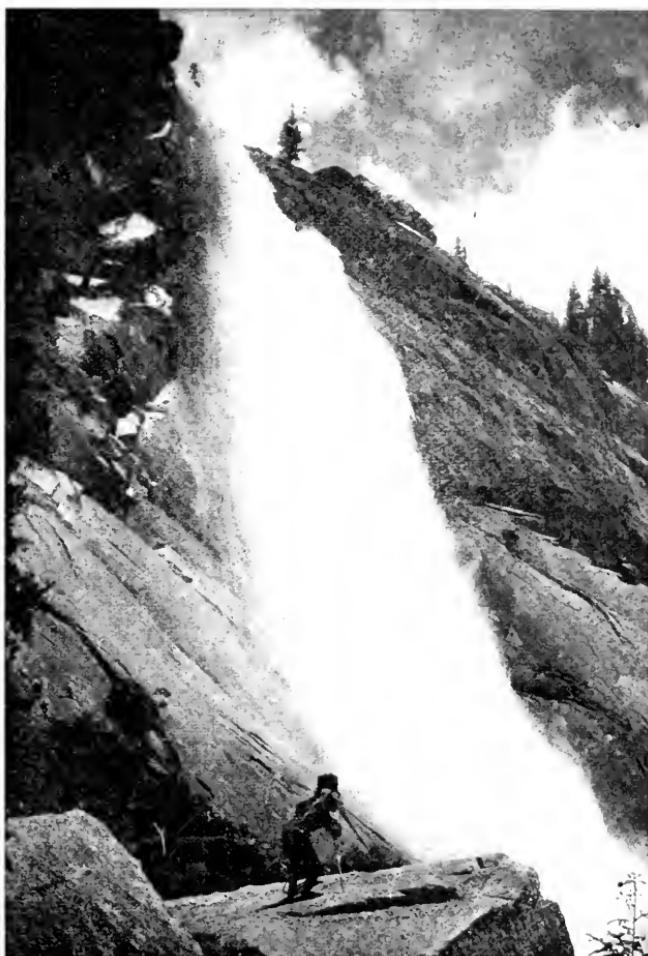
if waiting to hear the chimes peal forth from that cloud wrapped belfry. But all wait in vain, for—

No foot has pressed those stairways dizzy,
No hand has touched those silent bells;
No mortal sacristan there busy,
Silence alone the story tells;
Those aisles untrod, save by the spirits,
Whose mortal forms rest 'neath the sod;
They only have the power to hear its
Chimes of God.

In its presence, my feelings of solemnity were deepened, and with head uncovered and inclined, I adored the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, as I do not reeall to have ever done before, so clearly and unmistakably do these great monuments reveal His wisdom, power and beneficence to man.

Just in the rear of "Cathedral Rock," "The Bridal Veil" leaps from a precipitous wall, and for a thousand feet through the air, wavers and shimmers in all the purity of its dazzling whiteness, singing forever an anthem to the King. These falls may well be given the best attention of the traveler, as they are thoroughly individualistic and of a singularly charming presence, especially is this true of the rainbows to be seen in its rebounding mists and fountains of spray at about the hour of three o'clock in the afternoon of a bright summer's day. The day will pass, the river may in time dry up, even the valley may be destroyed, but so long as human consciousness lives to attest the truth, the picture of the rainbows here witnessed will remain clear and distinct as jewels of memory's most precious possessions.

A step farther toward the head of the valley, and on my left hand appears the "Three Brothers," to the most lofty of which has been given the very appropriate name of "Eagle's Peak." From the crest of the last mentioned of the many elevated outlooks about the valley, a most complete and magnificent view is presented. On my right stands "Sentinel Rock," posed a little to the fore of the south wall of the valley, and in an attitude impressively suggestive of the name it bears.



Profile of Nevada Fall, 594 Feet

Yosemite Falls

Turning to our left, although before noting one-half the above it has riveted our attention, gleams and roars the centerpiece of this famous collection of the world's natural wonders — "Yosemite Falls." A river forty feet wide and six feet deep plunges from off the mountain's crest, and like a great column of illuminated pearls and diamonds crashes through the air for a distance of three thousand feet, where its milk-white foam is dashed into impalpable globules which form mist clouds that roll upwards, enveloping the falls for hundreds of feet from its base, holding in their changing sheen the most brilliant rainbows which present a picture so beautiful and fascinating that it baffles all attempts at description and eludes all efforts at comparison.

One takes no note of time while in the Yosemite. The ordinary incidents of life are passed by without mention. We had camped in a beautiful grove just opposite Yosemite Falls, and had slept soundly notwithstanding the continuous thunder of the waters.

We arose early and trusting to the superior wisdom and native caution of a thoroughly trained mule that proved sure-footed as a Blondin, we began the ascent of the narrow trail that leads through a very narrow gorge, almost undiscernible to the gaze from the valley which parallels the course of these, the most striking and beautiful falls to be met with in the world.

The trail is safe, but it don't look it; the mule is safe, but it don't look it; everything about the valley looks different than it does elsewhere. But remembering that man lives by faith, I mounted the piece of animated statuary assigned me and was soon on my way up the tortuous trail leading to "Eagle's Peak" which guards the river from all interference from the encroachment of things that might interfere with its prize aerobatic feat in all of nature's activities.

As you approach the foot of the lower falls, the clouds of mist lie over, and in falling bedew your way. One moment the falls are in full view and the next you pass behind some great boulder or wind through some matting formed of the manzanita, small, spreading water oaks, or a grove of pines, and the glistening column is for the moment lost to view, but the ear

is ever noting the constant though ever changing music which rolls and echoes, rising and falling, thundering and sobbing through the rocky, shrub-clad aisles and cozy amphitheaters of the gorge. You reach the small table or ledge which forms the base of the great falls. The clouds of mist enwraps and covers you over as with a film of the most delicate silver broidery; the roar and thunder of the river as it strikes for the first time in its fall of fifteen hundred feet, is deafening. Looking up your eye follows the white, mist-wrapped falls to the point where it seemingly leaps out of the blue sky.

The sensations awakened are strange and bewildering. Your environments are new, and the reflection, caught from your innermost nature, introduces you to a seeming stranger, so peculiar are your ruling emotions. About you circling within a span of your knees and at regular spacings, appear as your focus of vision changes, and in regular order a multitude of rainbows of the most gorgeous hues, the smallest arching brilliant, but some two or three feet from point to point, while the largest, viewed from some distance above, from a point on the trail which ascends in spiral steeps to the left of the falls, is some five hundred yards, as the string sets to the bow, in span.

We are provided with rubber coats, and under the direction of our guide we are led over the wet stones until we stand against the wall directly back of the falls. To measure, to regulate, or to note, in order our sensations, would be to attempt the impossible. I take hold of the hand of my guide and advancing thrust the other hand into the shining stream; it is flung to my side tingling from the force of the falling waters.

Where Earth and Heaven Meet

You travel to the crest of the great mountain wall and approach along the bed of the foaming river, to the point where it takes its tremendous plunge to its creation of supernal beauty below. You summon all of courage at your command, and with cautious movements crawl along the granite boulders until you can look over into the awful chasm below. Beside you this mill-race of the gods is rushing in all the rage of its tremendous power, here and there, striking upon some boulder

which, projecting from the bed of the stream is firmly held in the vice-like grip of the mountain's power, and the whirling waters are broken and tossed aloft in diamond columns and jeweled fountains of surpassing brillianey and beauty. Look again; down, down, down, the glittering river with perian whiteness pours, and from your dizzying height the distance seems interminable. Sublime and majestic in its awful grandeur it appears. Lying prone, I watch the powerful sweep of the body of the stream as it, like a swift runner, reaches its greatest speed just before taking its tremendous leap of three thousand feet from the granite wall, to the valley below. It grips, it clutches, it draws as if to impel one to leap with it over the wall. There is a small pine, gnarled and stunted, yet holding its grip with roots twined in the creviced rocks as though possessed of more than human love of life. Its slim body inclines with the course of the falls, leaning far over and beyond the wall as if to watch the river dashed to mist and spray on the rocks below.

I crawl along until I can grasp the body of this small conifer; I shake it, or rather, I try to shake it, but find that I cannot do so. It is firm, solid and unyielding. Slowly and steadily I draw myself toward the root of this pine. I have never realized how very great a distance one's arm can be made to reach; the distance seemed interminable, but at length I am lying with eyes looking down over the edge of the wall. One fleeting glance and I close my eyes. The very mountain seems to sway and totter. The sight was appalling, thrilling, astounding. The river striking the solid bench or jut in the wall fifteen hundred feet below pours into a great white crater surrounded by a mountain of spray and mist thrown up by the tremendous force of its fall, which boils and shifts and foams, presenting a bewildering display of motion equalled by no other object I have ever seen. It laughs and shrills and shrieks as the wind dashes and shreds the sound and spray amid the upper crags of the gorge. Fifteen hundred feet of seething, dashing, roaring, raging water, capped with clouds of mist that roll upwards, up, up, up, until they crest the mountain and float away, appearing like smoke, wreathing amid the pines, the sunlight filtering through it all, presenting an indescribable scene of the most gorgeous beauty.

and entrancing charm; motion—the crowning grace and speech of form appearing in all of its bewitching elusiveness.

Small streams were being continuously torn from either side of the falls, resembling rockets of liquid silver shooting out into space, diverging farther and farther from the main column, their points being forced into continuous rings of mist by their rapid flight through the air, marking the terminous of flight until the shaft, torn from the main body of the river, sped on until its shining form was turned into rings of tiny clouds which hover, poise for a moment, then reunite with the falling water, or caught upon the wings of the wind, are transported skyward to fall again in drops of rain or feathery flakes. Skyrockets of water! and the setting! it is nowhere else to be found. The view is worth the risk. The impression is indelible.

I steady myself and draw cautiously back, crawling some distance before trusting myself on my feet. I then arose and started to where I had parted with my companion. Looking up I saw him, making the most frantic gestures, his mouth flying open and shutting rapidly. This I could see, but I could not hear any sound save the roaring of the waters. When I approached within hearing distance, I found that he was berating me soundly for what I had just done. He was thoroughly unnerved, and not without cause, for but a little distance away two ladies lay in a dead faint, caused by my, to them, daring act. I had not thought of the effect of my act upon others, a very grievous fault, all too common to our humanity.

A gentle sprinkle of water from the stream soon revived them, and they laughed heartily over the momentary thrill, which to them had proved overwhelming.

I turned away and farther up the still towering form of "Eagle's Peak" selected a spot where I might enjoy the glorious view undisturbed. Almost the whole of the valley lay spread out to view beneath me.

Here are the nooks where the bluebirds nest and the four-leaved clover blows.

Here the dreamer is awakened and lives the dream of dreams; he feels the very presence of omnipotence as he looks upon these death-defying immensities, calling from the shadows of Time's young centuries, through the echoless tem-

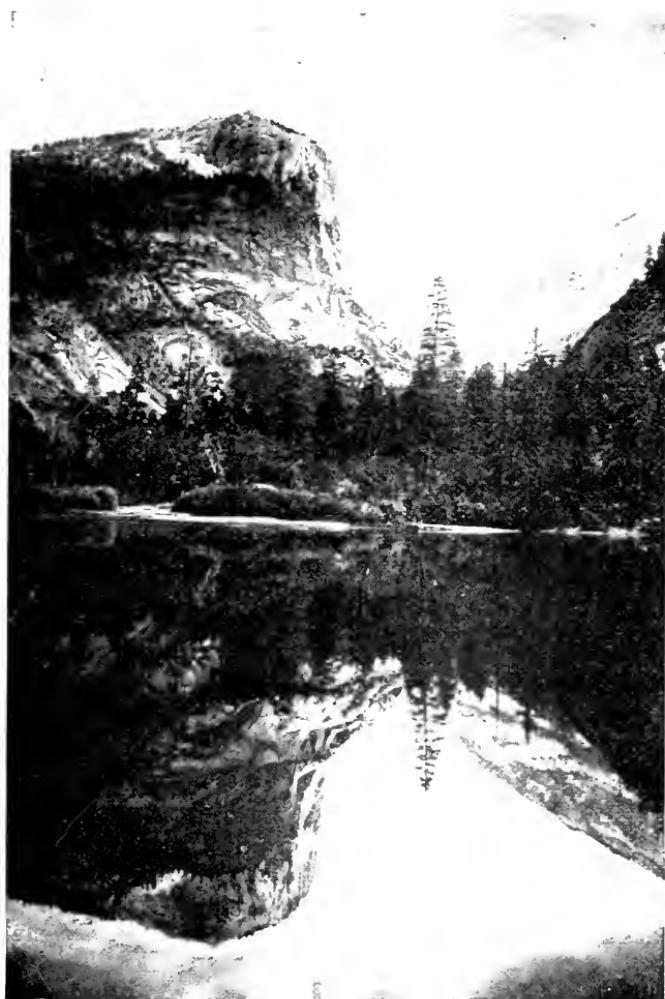
ples of sleep; he becomes aware of the meaning of the ultimate word—the message of immortality—and all but hears pronounced the ineffable name, as the curtain rises and he looks toward Jerusalem.

I here introduce the words of my brother, A. D. Kyle, who, gazing upon this scene, before entering into the great silence, paid it the following beautiful tribute:

“A fabulous realm of billowing meadows
On the rim of a plangent sea,
Filled to the gates with magical dreams
From the vales of sweet Araby;
The glad note of bird and murmuring fountains,
Violet skies and myth-haunted mountains,
Cumuli clouds and silvery light,
Lesbian songs when the curtains of night
Are shimmering softly with stars;
Of memories rare as faint odors blown
From groves of magnolia, or fields all abloom
With sweet mignonette in sunshine of June—
The rustle of leaves, the silking of corn,
The gleam of pansies so fair,
With breath of rosemary—and rue;
For thou art The White Oleander, it seems,
High Priestess of landscape and dreams;
Thou art the fleet-footed huntress, Diana,
Goddess of mountain and streams.”

In the central view to the south appears “Half Dome,” which rises nearly five thousand feet into the sapphire heavens, presenting the appearance of having been cleft in twain by a stroke of the sword of the Almighty, the “Half” left standing with smooth face to the valley. The imposing grandeur and magnificence of its presence are awe inspiring; even at this distance its presence may be felt as it sweeps the scene with an air of commanding power. “North Dome,” “Glacier Peak” and other grand monuments appear about the southern wall of the valley, and there in the distance, glinting and flashing in the sunlight comes the winding Merced, forming in its plunges over the terraced walls, the “Nevada,” and the Vernal Falls which are among the most beautiful objects in the valley.

In the farther southern distance I can catch glimpses of



Beautiful Mirror Lake, Yosemite

the four lesser valleys of the Yosemite, all similar in structure and surroundings to that of the main valley. More abrupt granite walls; more glistening, foaming, milk-white falls; more towering snow-capped peaks, more sylvan solitudes and lovely woodland nooks; in short, an inexhaustible supply of nature's unfailing fountains of pleasure.

I move back from the scene, wandering through the pines until the music of the valley comes in muffled tones, occasionally broken by the thunders of the greater falls, then I turn and slowly retrace my steps. The ever changing cadence of the music of the valley recalled to my mind an oceasian when I had listened to the "Anvil Chorus" rendered by a band of five hundred instrumentalists, playing upon every form and fashion of musical instruments productive of harmonious chords, from the nuance of sound, the tinkle of glass goblets gently struck by forks of silver, the oboe, the lute, the violin, the harp and wind instruments of every nature, until the swelling volume of sound was merged into the clash of the great hammers wielded by brawny arms upon the anvils, the ocean of sound reaching its highest wave in the thunders of artillery accompaniment.

At night we lay looking out of our open tent upon a world seemingly unreal. Through the glimmering gates woven of the moon's beams and the mists which opened up a road that stretched away starward and beyond, through the limitless bounds of space, listening to the voices of the night; the effect was soothing, pleasing, refreshing.

For many days I rode and walked about the valley slowly learning to enlarge impressions I had thought already full-grown. The effect is to teach humility, but at the same time to enlarge every intellectual quality of the mind.

Day after day, mounted upon a faithful burro, to which I became greatly attached, I rode up the blank walls of the valley mounting skyward as the housefly ascends the walls of a room to the ceiling, at least this illustration fits the sensations that accompany the rising of the heart in the throat as one's mount makes a pivot of its hind legs and describes a half circle with its fore feet in making the turn about the point dividing the "zig" from the "zag" in the constantly changing stairways mounting up the perilous steeps that lead to the towering points where sky, clouds and peaks intermingle.

Mirror Lake

The nature of the crystal waters of this lake proclaim its name; no lettered plate could add aught of information. This statement is alike true of everything in creation, that stands as a finished and completed product.

In this lake reflection is perfected; peaks, crag, tower, dome, woods, sky, clouds and every object caught within range is reproduced, cleared of the hazy effect of the atmosphere. The illustration is more striking than the reality; the effect more fascinating than the cause; the picture more beautiful than the original.

It is the hour of dawn. Our eyes are fastened upon the objects that are now coming into view in the depths of the lake. Slowly the waters take on an opalescent hue; the grey, the mauve, the blue become each moment more distinct. The outlines of Washington Column are now very clearly discerned. There is a small white cloud resting just above the great mountain's crest. As the objects below become clearer and clearer to the sight the waters disappear; they have become a crystal lense through which we look upon the scene below. The dissolving of the shadows and the coming of the light were one act. The coloring in the depths is intensified, it is iridescent, gleaming and flashing the colors of the peacock clam and mother-of-pearl.

The cloud! the cloud! it is suffused with crimson—it glows—it is afame! And now the God of Day, clothed in the radiant splendor of his imperial power sweeps over the mountain's crest and ushers in his rule. The picture a duplicate creation! "As above, so below!" and we, standing on the narrow dividing line between two worlds, two suns, two skies, two days each arched with radiant sky-distances immeasurable!

The depths are equal to the heights. It was as though all objects were founded upon some invisible base line, extending equally in diametric opposition, each pointing to limitless space, each saying by its perfect presence. "I am the sky." "I am the cloud." "I am the mountain." "I am the tree." "I am the sun." "I am the day." I have never been so impressed with the fascination of illusion; it draws and grips and holds. The seeming contest for supremacy is exciting while it lasts. And before going the illusion seemed to say:

"I have effected more in my short hour of life than have my crass counterparts. I have given more pleasure and created more interest than they. I was a thing of beauty, and will live in the minds of all who have been permitted to behold my countenance. The wise will be slow to withhold from me the honors that are my due."

You feel your very soul becoming infused with the matchless glory of the scene; you strive to push back the walls of your understanding that you may grasp more of the majesty, the beauty and grandeur of this revelation direct from the Master's hand. You look, and look, and look again—the mystery is not solved—it deepens. Unlettered revelations, vivid as the lightning severing the storm!

This magical lake forms one of the most refreshing spots to be found on the road of life's experiences. I lift its chalice to my lips and drink and drink again of the ambrosial wine distilled from the royal splendors of the earth's immensities, the sermonizing pines, pointing steadfastly upward and feel the glow of the fires which are kindled upon the altar of aspiration. The winds seem whispering a benediction, and from the heart of the mysterious depths and heights is made known this truth: To live with nature is to dwell with God.

We come to take our last view of the valley before starting out on our return trip. The morning shadows lie within the valley while the upper walls, the peaks, the domes, the spires and clouds are bathed in the golden flood of morning light; silver bands murmuring nature's sweetest notes as they sway, flutter and break in falling through the air; grand rivers leaping over the walls and falling for thousands of feet; grandeurs so powerful and beauties so delicate that none save memory's largest and most retentive urn can receive and retain but the faintest impressions of the marvels of this world's wonderland.

As well attempt to lay hands on and retain the rainbow, or scale with other than the wings of imagination, these towering walls and spires of granite as to attempt to convey the impressions here received to others. Each must see and hear and feel, and become bewildered—lost and baffled in the attempt to understand, before any true sense of the influence of the valley may be realized.

The winds are touching the organ of the pines, and mingling with the thunder of the falls, are echoing and re-echoing

through the vast galleries with soft, sibilant vibrations, distinctly audible and separate; the massive walls and towering columns impress you anew with their unmeasured power and grandeur. They photograph, through the camera of the eye, a thousand pictures which will remain forever stored away in the picture gallery of the mind, furnishing at will a wealth of pleasure for contemplation in after years.

No other hour of life has furnished a tithe of the education and elevating instruction which were crowded into this, our first view of the valley.

It stands out as a scene of grandeur, beauty and magnificence, unequalled by any other known creation of the Almighty.

As year after year of life shall pass over us, and deeper griefs and more earnest efforts shall expand and develop our capacity to enjoy, we shall return with full and complete confidence in the power of this valley to furnish a full and overflowing measure of new and enlarged impressions to satisfy and even to surpass our powers to comprehend their teachings.

The enchanting paths of pleasure here terminate only at the limit of one's capacity to grasp and comprehend.

The whole valley is kaleidoscopic; pen cannot depict, nor can brush portray the subtle charm of its ever shifting scenes; each step the scene is changed and presents a view that holds the gavel of the mind uplifted, and it falls not in decision as to which one of them is entitled to preferment. Its voicings and impressions are unmeasurable and uninterpretable. Its music, flowing from nature's grand kalliflorgan set in the eternal hills, and played by the rivers, winds and storms, furnish fitting anthems for its imperishable temples.





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